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FM AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2892
INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE
RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE
RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 5247
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 2983
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 2848
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 3491
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RHMFIUU/CDR USCENCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 3585

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SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/CEN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [SMIG](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [SOCI](#) [TX](#)

SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN: MIGRATION OFFICIALS DO NOT
ACKNOWLEDGE OBSTACLES TO EMIGRATION

11. (SBU) On May 27, Political Officer met with Senior Inspector of the Central Apparatus of the State Migration Service, Mekan Hojayevev, and Acting Head of the Visa Department, Dowran Kurbannazarov, to discuss the situation of freedom of emigration in Turkmenistan. Hojayevev stated that according to the Turkmen Constitution, the right of citizens to freely enter and leave the country is guaranteed. The only reasons to restrict emigration by a citizen are if an individual has broken the law or if an individual is found to be a security threat to a neighboring country, determined in coordination with that country's government.

12. (SBU) Hojayevev denied the existence of any list of citizens who are not allowed to leave Turkmenistan (a "blacklist"), and then qualified his statement by saying that "at least (he) was not aware of it." He offered that the only such list would consist of names of criminals, who have been sentenced based on a judicial decision. Any such restriction would only apply for a fixed period, and would not last a lifetime. Hojayevev mentioned that the number of Turkmen departing the country increased during the past year, however, when asked for emigration statistics, he suggested that the Embassy send a diplomatic note to the Foreign Ministry requesting the figures. Concerning November 2008 revisions to the Law on Migration, Hojayevev said the changes were minor technical corrections that did not result in a substantive change of the law.

13. (SBU) COMMENT: These officials were adamant that the Turkmen Government does not restrict the right of its citizens to leave the country. Their position flies in the face of numerous, credible reports of individuals, with no criminal record, being blocked from leaving the country. Apparently even a token acknowledgement of a possible problem was not in accordance with the guidance they had been given. This attitude makes it difficult to expect that the situation will improve any time soon.

MILES